

Ximenez-Fatio House
(Fatio House)
St. Augustine, Florida

HABS-Fla. 116

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Florida

Historic American Buildings Survey
Bernard W. Close, District Officer
Bisbee Building, Jacksonville, Fla.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. FLA-116

XIMENEZ-FATIO HOUSE

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An Addendum to
Fatio House
22 Avilés Street
St. Augustine, Florida
in HABS Catalog (1941)

Address: 22 Avilés Street at Cadiz Street, St. Augustine,
St. Johns County, Florida

Present Owner: The National Society of the Colonial Dames of
America in the State of Florida

Present Use: Historic house museum

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. The following information was compiled by Mrs. Doris Wiles of the St. Augustine Historical Society on September 3, 1962 (with translations by Mrs. Eugenia Arana):

"On what is presently our earliest record of property ownership in St. Augustine, the Juan José Eligio de la Puente map, of January 24, 1764, the property at the corner of Avilés and Cádiz Streets is identified as No. 243 in Square V. On it were two structures, which Puente describes as houses of ripio (tabby) belonging to Cristoval Contreras. Contreras was a native of the Canary Islands.

"The British map by the engineer James Moncrief, dated 1765, shows three buildings, two of which appear to be in the same location as those of the Puente map, with a Dr. Pritchard as owner. Nothing is known of Pritchard, except that he is probably the John Pritchard who left East Florida after the Revolutionary war and went to live in the Bahamas. Nor have any other British owners been found.

"In 1788, Mariano de la Rocque, Spanish engineer, made a map. Block 27 - No. 186 shows one building only, described as the ruins of a masonry house, in bad condition; the lot and ruins in the custody of Luis Contreras. The location of this ruin appears to be in the same location as one of the Puente and Moncrief structures.

"Luis Contreras was the son of the 1764 owner, Cristoval Contreras, and his wife Dorotea Anaya, and was born in St. Augustine on June 4, 1763, just at the time the Spanish residents were preparing to evacuate to Cuba. It appears as though he may have returned to reclaim his father's former property, but no claim has been found.

"Two years later, in 1790, properties that had reverted to the Spanish Crown were listed for disposal by Governor Quesada. This property appears as Number 234 on that list, and is described as a lot only, in possession of one Francisco Roche. The public sale took place on April 8, 1791, and the lot was bid in by Juan Hernández, for which bond and contract were delivered on May 7. Hernández retained title until November 7, 1797, when he sold the lot to Andrés Ximenez. On August 11, 1802 the governor confirmed title to the lot in perpetuity to Ximenez. No building is mentioned. This is emphasized because earlier research indicated that the kitchen may have been one of these earlier buildings, but this statement is not supported by the documents.

"Meanwhile, Andrés Ximenez had married Juana Pellicer, daughter of Francisco and Margarita Femanias. Francisco was a master carpenter, and one of the leaders of the refugees from the New Smyrna colony to St. Augustine.

"Andrés and Juana had two sons and one daughter: Miguel, born in 1793, José born in 1796 and Rosa, born in 1798. At an undetermined date between 1798 and 1802 Juana passed away, leaving Andrés with three small children to raise.

"On October 11, 1802, Andrés made a will, which is recorded in the Escrituras. The St. Augustine Historical Society does not have a complete copy of this first will, but the brief states that he owns the house he lives in with its lot, and a second lot in front of it; that he has a mulatto slave, named Rosa, and that he operates a shop or store. His house was already built.

"This second lot in front of his residence, mentioned both in the 1802 will and a later one made at the time of his death in 1806, has caused much confusion, and only the full translation of the second will and all of its many supporting documents and examination of the Escrituras, has clarified the matter.

"Although Ximenez had purchased property across Avilés Street in November, 1791 from Antonio Palma, he had sold it in February, 1800, to one Mariano de Lasaga. How, then, could he mention it in his will as part of his estate, in 1802 and again in 1806? Because he had repurchased it from Lasaga on July 27, 1801, to be paid for in two years, and no deed appears in the Escrituras because he evidently had not finished paying for it prior to his death!

"On April 10, 1806, Andrés Ximenez made a second will, and on April 17 he died. He states that he is a widower, and names his three children, all minors, as heirs. Santos Rodríguez, storekeeper at the fort, and Gregorio Suarez, assistant pharmacist of the Royal hospital, were named executors. His estate, Ximenez declared, consisted of the house in which he lived, with its lot, and another lot,

bounding his residence on the front and with the street between them, on the south by the lane that goes to the Marina (Cádiz) and east and north by Don Manuel Solana; one mulatto slave named Rosa, 35 years old, and he said that he had a 'tienda de comestibles' or general merchandise store 'en la citada casa' - in the mentioned house. From the inventories and appraisals, it appears possible, however, that the store was in one of the buildings to the rear of and possibly connected to the dwelling.

"There is an inventory of the merchandise in the store, some stone that he had either for sale or some other purpose, his furniture, his china and crystal, and his belongings of gold, silver and other metal; his house, two storehouses, kitchen and outbuildings, and separately listed, a fairly large stone kitchen with a chimney and a small wooden house in the rear (interior) of the second lot. The little house measured only 17-1/2 feet x 12 feet, and 7 feet high. There was a wooden fence.

"This is mentioned because this lot is described in previous research as having no buildings on it. After Andrés' death, the little wooden house 'la casita' was being rented to Marcelino Espinosa, a mulatto, who had also purchased some items at the sale of Ximenez' belongings (see Mr. Beeson's translation).

"The main house, where Ximenez lived, was of stone, two stories high. The number of second floor rooms is not clear, but it had a sala, or parlor, with a chimney, and a comedor, or dining room. The lower floor was of ormigón, similar to tabby but much finer. It had 15 doors, 16 windows (some of the doors would have been interior), partitions of wood, and a stairway with bannisters and railing and a cupboard below. The roof was of wood with four dormer windows (techo con 4 ventanas). No balcony or gallery is mentioned. Since the house now has 5 dormers, 3 in front and one each on the north and south, a balcony on the east as well as other differences, it appears that extensive changes and alterations were made by some owner between 1806 and the time of some of the early photographs of the house. This is not unusual, during a span of many years.

"In addition to the house, two stores or storehouses (almacenes) are described as being on the same lot. The first storehouse was of stone, had a shingle roof and floor of ormigón. The second, which appears to have been joined in part to the first, was also of stone, had a stone chimney, but the floor was wood and the roof of split pine shingles. Further evidence that they were joined together in some way is that the doors and windows, 3 of each, were counted as being in one building. There was also a ladder (escalera de mano). Reviewing the types of merchandise handled by Ximenez, it is possible to believe that the larger of these two buildings, the one with the ormigón floor, could have been his store, and the other a sort of warehouse.

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"Then there was the kitchen, also of stone, with a chimney and oven, and a shingle roof. Wherever a chimney is mentioned, it is assumed that there was also a fireplace. The kitchen had 3 doors and 3 windows. No 'slave quarters' are mentioned. 55-3406 12

"Last but not least there was a wooden privy and wash shed, with a wooden fence, and a stone well. And on the south side there was a stone wall (Cádiz Street).

"It appears that all of the merchandise in the store, as well as the furnishings of the house were sold. Don Ventura Boix was the buyer of the bulk of these effects, and shortly afterwards he rented the lower floor of the house, while William Cook rented the upper portion. Various other individuals purchased one or more items as will be seen by the document translated in 1960 by Mr. Kenneth Beeson.

"As requested in his will, Ximenez was buried in an especially made shroud of the Order of St. Francis. His coffin was built by Antonio Llambias. The three children were outfitted in black for the period of mourning, and temporarily, after their father's death, were cared for by Gregorio Suarez and his wife Maria Pellicer, their mother's sister.

"The youngest boy, José, had been apprenticed to Monsieur Desmouliens, a French tailor. This gentleman was also one of the purchasers at the sale, his name being phonetically spelled 'Demolé' by the Spanish scribe. Eventually, Francisco Pellicer, the grandfather, took over as guardian of the children.

"The eldest son, Miguel Valentín, went to Santa Clara, Cuba, and married Juana Andrea Vila on December 8, 1816. Because they were of both second and third degree of blood relationship (she was the daughter of Don Juan Vila and Doña Teresa Famanía) they received a dispensation. The ceremony of the veil took place on February 18, 1817.

"No marriage has been found for the other son, José. Rosa married Juan Buchany of St. Augustine sometime between 1819 and 1827.

"In 1819, grandfather Francisco gave an accounting of the remainder of Andrés Ximenez' estate, and stated that the lot (across the street) had already been sold - no date or purchaser given - for 90 pesos.

"The three children eventually disposed of their shares of the property and subsequently it came into the possession of Miss Louisa Fatio in 1855. She held it for about 20 years until her death. After considerable litigation, it descended through her heirs to Mr. D. R. Dunham, who sold it to the present owners.

"During Miss Louisa's time the house became quite famous as a winter residence and one of its most well-known visitors was Miss Constance Fennimore Wooson. 55 SAUG 12.

"However, it appears that the name of Ximenez is more closely connected with the property over a longer period of years, and should be honored. It also appears probable that Andrés Ximenez built both the house (original) and the kitchen, sometime between 1797 and 1802. Ximenez was a man of some means, and he states in his will that all of his estate had been accumulated since his marriage to Juana Pellicer."

B. Additional historical information is given in a display at the Ximenez-Fatio House. The following chronology is extracted from this display. No source is indicated; however, the nature of the information indicates that it is based on documentary research. Guides at the house have indicated that the Colonial Dames, the present owners, have this documentation, or at least copies of it, in their possession.

-On January 7, 1825, Joseph Ximenez conveyed the property by warranty to Francis Gue for \$770.00.

-On February 1, 1825, Francis Gue conveyed the property by warranty deed to Margaret Cook for \$700.00.

-In 1827 John Buchina and his wife, Rosa Ximenez, conveyed their one-third interest in the property by warranty deed to Margaret Cook. It was stated that Rosa had inherited this interest from her father, Andres Ximenez.

-In 1830 Gabriel W. Perpall, attorney-in-fact for Miguel Ximenez, conveyed a one-third interest in the property to Margaret Cook for \$640. Perpall had recorded his appointment as attorney-in-fact in Deed Book H on page 502 (St. Johns County Records).

-In 1838 Margaret Cook, widow of Samuel Cook, conveyed by warranty deed the property to Sarah P. Anderson, widow of George Anderson for \$4000.00.

-In 1855 Sarah P. Anderson conveyed the property by warranty deed to Louisa Fatio (daughter of Don Francisco Felipe Fatio) for \$3000.00.

-In 1875 Louisa Fatio died and in her will the property was devised to her heirs, from whom David L. Dunham obtained the title. When he died his interest went to his wife, Lillie O. Dunham, whose son David R. Dunham acquired the property at her death.

-In 1939 the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Florida purchased the property from David R. Dunham.

- "Repairs and restoration" - 1941-42.

- In 1958 the Society purchased the property immediately adjacent to the north. This property was known as the Pfeiffer property.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest and merit: "A home . . . representative of the era [Second Spanish Period, 1784-1821] is the town house long associated with the Fatio family. Built in the early 1800's, it plainly shows the influence of Spaniard, English and American - as well as a growing family which caused rather drastic enlargement."
[Albert Manucy, The Houses of St. Augustine, 1565-1821 (St. Augustine, Florida: St. Augustine Historical Society, 1962), p. 46.]
2. Condition of fabric: Well maintained as an historic house museum by the Colonial Dames.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: Two-and-a-half stories, with two-story rear ell.
2. Number of bays: Six-bay front by seven bays (including rear ell).
3. Over-all dimensions: 50'-9 1/8" (front) x 30'-11" (main block); 15'-7 1/2" x 50'-10 7/8" (rear ell).
4. Layout, shape: Rectangular main block with a recessed, centrally placed rear loggia, and an extensive rear ell.
5. Foundations: Unobserved. "By present day standard, house walls [in St. Augustine prior to 1821] had no foundation. The usual preparation was to excavate a trench slightly wider than the wall and about a foot deep. A thin layer of flat stones or oyster shells was tossed in a sort of spread footing, after which the workmen began wall construction without further ado." [Albert Manucy, The Houses of St. Augustine, 1565-1821, p. 68.]
6. Wall construction: The data in the historic section of this report indicates that the main (front) section of the first floor is made of fine tabby (ormigón). The second floor and the first floor of the rear ell may be

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of the same material. (It seems likely, however, that some of the construction of these sections may be of coquina masonry). All of these surfaces are plastered. The rear ell's second story is of frame construction with clapboarding on the south side (Cadiz Street) and matched board siding on the rear (west side). This second story of the rear ell has a plastered wall surface on the north side (under the gallery, which gives access to the four rooms). Generally the exterior surface of the house is painted a light buff-cream color.

7. Structural system, framing: Interior partitions appear to be of both frame and masonry or tabby construction.
8. Porches: A cantilevered wooden frame balcony projects approximately 4-1/2' over Avilés Street. It has 4-5/8" square wooden posts (chamfered above the railing), molded railings, and simple wooden balusters (rectangular in section). The flooring is of 5-3/4" boarding nailed with approximately 1/4" openings between each. This porch has a hipped roof. The central, two-tiered, "recessed" rear loggia also projects approximately 7' into the garden. This "porch" is continuous with the two-tiered wooden gallery which extends along the north (garden) side of the rear ell. The loggia has a partially enclosed three-run wooden stairway to the second floor. Near the western end (rear) of the ell gallery is a simpler, single-run, wooden stairway. The first level of both the loggia and the gallery has 8" x 8" wooden posts with simple wooden "capitals" (which, in reality, are simply several wooden pieces nailed to the posts approximately 1'-7" below the framing of the second-floor level). The wooden posts of the second level of both loggia and gallery are 4-1/2" x 4-1/2" with molded corners. At this level there are also molded wooden railings and simple rectangular wooden balusters. The flooring of the first level appears to be tabby (a ground-level "terrace"); that of the second: wide, random-width board flooring in the recessed part of the loggia, 7-1/4" wide board flooring in that section of the loggia that extends westward into the garden area, and approximately 3-1/4" board flooring in the gallery. The second level of the gallery also has a 9-1/2" high molded, wooden baseboard. Both loggia and gallery have shed roofs covered with shingles that appear to be cement asbestos.
9. Chimneys: The main block has two tall brick chimneys. One is located on the south slope of the hipped roof - next to the single dormer. The second one is located on the front (east) slope of the hipped roof (near the

northern hip). Both have twentieth-century, metal "super-structures" or vent systems.

The rear ell has two chimneys at the gable ridge. They are relatively large; they appear to be square in section; and they are made at least partially of brick. Obviously the height of both was raised, since the middle point of each has a brick molding. Both are crowned by several twentieth-century metal stacks.

10. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The two Avilés Street entries have six-paneled wooden doors that have simple moldings. The main entry door also has raised paneling. The majority of the other exterior doors are six-paneled, wooden doors with simple moldings; none have raised panels, however. A few of these appear to be contemporary with the secondary front entry. Others date more likely from the later nineteenth century. There is also a vertical board door, as well as a six-paneled (four upper panels glazed, three-light transom over), wooden door in the northern section of the main block. The doors from the main drawing room on the second floor to the front balcony and to the rear loggia are both double wooden doors - each section three-paneled. All windows and doors have wooden trim, painted brown.
- b. Windows and shutters: Six-over-nine light, double-hung, wooden sash set in simple molded wooden frames. The exception to this is a six-over-six light, double-hung, wooden sash in the wall, which protects one side of the loggia stairway. With one exception, there are no exterior shutters. (On the north side of the main section of the house there is an exterior, louvered, wooden shutter). There are unpainted, wooden, interior shutters at several windows that have a southern exposure - particularly in the rear ell. Since the house is open only once a week to the public, these evidently were added after the restoration to protect the antique furnishings from the sun.

11. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Both the main section and the rear ell have hipped roofs with slight kicks. The shed roofs of the loggia and gallery continue the slopes of the main roofs. The front balcony has a hipped roof, the main slope of which continues the slope of the main roof. All these roof areas are covered with what appears to be modern cement asbestos tiles (an obvious change from the covering noted in the 1936 HABS drawings for the Fatio House).

- b. Cornice: Exposed wooden roof beams. Modern metal eaves trough and drain pipes.
- c. Dormers: Six wooden, frame dormers with gable roofs. These dormers have six-over-six light, double-hung, wooden sash and clapboard siding. The covering is the same as the other roof surfaces.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Albert Manucy in his book, The Houses of St. Augustine, 1565-1821, p. 60, uses a plan of what appears to be the Ximenez-Fatio House to illustrate a discussion of the "Wing Plan" - one of three categories into which he divides his discussion of St. Augustine's historic domestic architecture. The wing plan was characterized by a "main structure of two or more rooms, plus a substantial wing or two which make the plan an L, U, or H [in this case an L]. In its better aspects, with arcades or galleries around a patio, it was a somewhat pretentious layout for the residence of a government official or a prominent family." Of course, the main structure in this case was a variation of the "St. Augustine plan" (p. 55): it had a "loggia (open-sided room) as an integral part of the plan, centered on the side [the rear, in this case]." The second-floor plan is similar.
2. Stairways: There are two staircases. Both are essentially exterior - one in the loggia, and one at the rear of the gallery.
 - a. Main stairway: Three-run, closed-string, open-newel, wooden stair with turned wooden balusters (three per tread), molded handrails, and turned newel posts. This stairway continues to the attic and has three runs, an open newel and open string, square newel posts with partially beveled edges, rectangular wooden balusters, and slightly rounded square handrails. In all features the stairway from the second floor to the attic is more simple than that from the first to the second floor. The under sides of all runs are plastered and painted the light buff-cream color that all exterior walls are painted. Under the first and second runs of the main stairway, however, are storage spaces with vertical boarding painted brown and a single, four-paneled, wooden door.
 - b. Rear stairway: Narrow, single-run, wooden staircase with molded wooden handrails, square (molded corners) wooden newels, and narrow rectangular wooden balusters (two per tread). The space under this staircase is

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enclosed with vertical boarding (approximately 5-1/4" wide) for storage. A narrow wooden door made of three vertical boards and battens is covered with what seems to be plywood. All woodwork on both staircases is painted brown.

3. Flooring: First floor - tabby floors; second floor - wide board flooring.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All rooms have plastered walls. The main rooms are painted a soft green; the others are either a light salmon color or white (in the rear ell).
5. Doorways and doors: A pair of wooden folding (two sections each) doors connect the central second-floor main parlor with the southeast corner parlor. Each section, painted the light green of the walls, has three panels. A smaller doorway to the northeast room has a similar door, with two sections only, however. The remaining second-floor doors are wooden, four- and six-paneled with simple moldings; the simple wooden door frames are molded. The first floor, in general, has six-paneled wooden doors with moldings, and simple molded door frames.

"In the British colonies, the 6-panel door was in vogue during much of the 18th century (Fig. 39). Good examples of it are yet found in St. Augustine, notably in the Fatio House (although this house is later than English period)." [Albert Manucy, The Houses of St. Augustine, 1565-1821, pp. 82-83.]
6. Decorative features and trim: Both first- and second-floor rooms have simple wooden baseboards; those in the second-floor parlors are molded. These parlors also have molded chair rails. The wooden chimney pieces all have paneled pilasters and narrow board mantel shelves. The wide horizontal members of the fireplaces in the two second-floor main parlors have projecting central sections.
7. Notable hardware: Mainly box locks.
8. Lighting: The major portion of the house has no electric lighting fixtures. The exception is the modern kitchen in the rear of the ell. The entire house, however, is electrically wired - note outlets.
9. Heating: Fireplaces throughout.

D. Site:

1. Orientation and general setting: The Ximenez-Fatio House faces east on Avilés Street. Entry is directly from the street.

2. Outbuildings: A rectangular (33'-11" x 14'-3") kitchen building with two rooms is located in the garden to the northwest of the main structure. (The rear wall of this kitchen is almost in line with the rear [west] wall of the rear ell - only three feet from the ell's gallery.) The tabby and/or coquina structure, which may predate the main building, is plastered and painted the same buff-cream color as the house. It has a relatively steep gable roof with modern cement asbestos roof shingles. The framework of the roof is exposed in the interior. There are both a rear and front entrance to the larger kitchen room itself and a single front entrance to the pantry (north) room. These entries have simple wooden frames and board and batten doors. The windows also have simple wooden frames and casement windows (inswinging, five lights per section). Both gable ends also have windows with six-over-six light, double-hung, wooden sash. All exterior woodwork is painted brown.

A small twentieth-century masonry garage with vertical board doors is located in the northwest corner of the garden. It belonged to another domestic structure that formerly was situated on the property to the north of the Ximenez-Fatio House.

3. Landscaping: In 1958 the Colonial Damas purchased the property immediately to the north of their structure for garden purposes. In general, the entire original garden area and the more recently purchased property are now a lawn with random-placed fruit trees, palm trees, and bushes. There are also several flower beds and concrete walks. The plantings include:

- Japanese plum trees (loquat)
- Parkinsonia trees
- Grapefruit trees
- Fig tree
- Palm trees
- Banana trees
- Spanish bayoneta (along the
Avilés Street coquina garden wall).

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